

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 006757

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 006757

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, IC, UK, PFOR

SUBJECT: UK/ICELAND FISHERIES DISPUTE

1. PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR ICELAND, AMBASSADOR KROYER OF ICELAND SAW UNDER SECRETARY SISCO ON JANUARY 9 TO SET FORTH AGAIN THE ICELANDIC POSITION IN THE CURRENT FISHERIES DISPUTE AND TO PRESENT HIM WITH A COPY OF THE JANUARY 8 COMMUNIQUE AND OTHER DOCUMENTS. KROYER CITED THE LATEST INCIDENTS AT SEA, MAINTAINING THAT THEY WERE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BRITISH FRIGATES. HE GAVE AN IMPASSIONED DEFENSE OF THE INTEGRITY OF THE ICELANDIC COAST GUARD AND OF THE ICELANDIC SYSTEM OF JUSTICE WHICH HE FELT HAD BEEN CALLED INTO QUESTION BY CERTAIN BRITISH STATEMENTS AND ACTIONS. HE NOTED THAT THESE SAME ACTIONS AND ATTITUDES

WERE DRIVING THE GOI INTO A CORNER WHERE SEVERANCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE UK WOULD BECOME INEVITABLE.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 006757

KROYER EMPHASIZED THAT, IN SPITE OF PROVOCATION, ICELAND

WAS CONTINUING TO ACT IN A MEASURED WAY. HE CITED AS AN EXAMPLE THE FACT THAT CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER OR NOT TO BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH AS A RESULT OF THE JANUARY 9 INCIDENT WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE ICELANDIC MARITIME COURT BEING CALLED

TO ADJUDICATE THE CASE.

2. KROYER SAID THAT THE CABINET MEETING IN REYKJAVIK ON JANUARY 8 HAD DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY OF WITHDRAWING ICELAND FROM ACTIVE COOPERATION IN NATO. HE STATED THAT THE GOI WOULD TRY TO AVOID THIS STEP, BUT THAT BRITISH ACTIONS MIGHT MAKE THIS IMPOSSIBLE IN SPITE OF THE FRIENDLY ATTITUDE OF ICELAND'S CURRENT GOVERNMENT TOWARDS NATO. HE WARNED THAT ICELAND'S CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IN NATO WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT ISSUE IN ANY FUTURE ELECTION IN ICELAND. KROYER CONCLUDED THAT HE HAD, AS YET, NO INSTRUCTIONS TO SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM THE USG. HE STATED THAT HE WOULD, HOWEVER, BE QUITE INTERESTED IN WHAT THE US INTENDED TO DO AT THE JANUARY 12 NATO COUNCIL MEETING.

3. UNDER SECRETARY SISCO INDICATED THAT THE DEPARTMENT WOULD WANT TO WEIGH CAREFULLY WHAT THE AMBASSADOR HAD SAID BEFORE MAKING ANY PLANS OR DECISIONS. HE REITERATED US CONCERN ABOUT THIS MATTER WHICH WAS IMPORTANT TO THE UNITED KINGDOM AND OF VITAL CONCERN TO THE GOI. HE STRESSED HIS WELCOME FOR THE STATEMENT BY THE AMBASSADOR THAT, DESPITE PRESSURES, THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO PROCEED IN A MEASURED WAY. HE SAID THAT SUCH AN ATTITUDE SHOULD MEAN THAT NO DOORS WOULD BE CLOSED WITH UNDUE HASTE. HE NOTED THAT ICELAND'S INTENTION TO TAKE THE MATTER TO NATO WAS A CONSTRUCTIVE STEP, AND HE THOUGHT THE INVITATION TO SECRETARY LUNS TO VISIT ICELAND TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION MIGHT PROVE HELPFUL. HE REPEATED THE US POSITION THAT THE DISPUTE BE SETTLED PEACEFULLY BY THE TWO PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE SO THAT THE SERIOUS CONCERNS OF THEIR NATO ALLIES COULD BE LAID TO REST. THE UNDER SECRETARY UNDERLINED THAT THE STEP OF BREAKING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WAS A VERY SERIOUS ONE, AND HE URGED THE GOI TO CONTINUE TO ACT IN A MEASURED MANNER.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 006757

4. KROYER ASKED IF THE MATTER HAD BEEN DISCUSSED RECENTLY BY THE US AND UK GOVERNMENTS. THE UNDER SECRETARY RESPONDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH THE BRITISH, BUT HE REPEATED THE US VIEW THAT THIS WAS A MATTER WHICH SHOULD BE RESOLVED BILATERALLY IN A PEACEFUL WAY. HE STATED THE US DETERMINATION TO STAY OUT OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE MATTER BUT ADDED THAT THE USG WOULD CONTINUE TO WATCH THE

SITUATION CLOSELY AND WOULD REVIEW THE SITUATION PRIOR TO THE
NATO COUNCIL SESSION. HE CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT HE
WOULD LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING THE AMBASSADOR UPON THE
LATTER'S RETURN FROM ICELAND. KISSINGER UNQUOTE
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